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Middlebury addresses Israel-Gaza war in conversations with conflict transformation lens

By COLE CHAUDHARI
Copy Editor

A recent panel and structured dialogue session have given the Middlebury community the opportunity to address the war in Israel and Gaza.

As the first in a series of interfaith discussions, an Oct. 25 panel on compassion, justice and nonviolence sought to bring a diverse array of religious perspectives to the campus conversation about the conflict in the region.

Put on by the Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation and the New Perennials project, the event featured chaplains and religious advisors from the Charles P. Scott Center for Religious Life. They gathered in the McCullough Student Center to discuss these themes as informed by their respective religious backgrounds and worldviews.

Members of the panel included Muslim Chaplain and interfaith advisor Zahra Moeini, Rabbi Danielle Stillman, interim Christian Affiliate

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MIDDLEBURY LAUNCHES FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN AIMING TO RAISE $600 MILLION BY 2028

By RYAN McELROY
Managing Editor

The launch of "For Every Future" took place on Oct. 26 in the newly renovated Christian A. Johnson Memorial Building. COURTESY PHOTO

Middlebury students, administrators, faculty, alumni and the Board of Trustees gathered on Oct. 26 in the newly renovated Christian A. Johnson Memorial Building to celebrate the public launch of "For Every Future: The Campaign for Middlebury," the college's campaign to raise $600 million by June 30, 2028. The campaign has received $383 million and engaged 64% of alumni as of Oct. 31, funding plans to improve financial aid, academics and student experiences at the college.

The campaign aims to raise money for specific college initiatives such as the financial aid program, academic programs and student life at Middlebury. The campaign began on July 1, 2021 after being disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic; the most recent previous campaign lasted from 2007 to 2015 and raised $535.5 million. The funds will be divided among various priorities, with $215 million for "access," $120 million for "academic excellence," $70.5 million for "experience" and $117 million for "capital projects," in addition to $77.5 million for annual fundraising, according to the campaign case for support.

At the campaign's public launch, President Laurie Patton reflected on the goals of the campaign and thanked the gathered audience for supporting the college.

"This campaign is going to accomplish things. It will ensure access to a Middlebury education, it will enhance our academic excellence — already a model for so many in the world. It will expand our experiential programs, and fund the buildings and structures that are so important to teaching and learning," Patton said at the launch.

She also expressed her gratitude for all supporters of Middlebury — ranging from those who have given their first $5 donation to those who donated $25 million — and explained that the campaign's public phase is now aiming to engage 85% of undergraduate alumni in a variety of ways in order to build community at the college.

Middlebury's plan aims to increase financial accessibility at the college by maintaining the college's fiscal capability to provide need-blind admissions for domestic students, as well as increase flexible and emergency funding to reduce the associated costs of travel or necessary clothing.

Donations are most often restricted to funding financial aid, followed by internships, according to Alanna Shanley '99, associate vice president for advancement and co-executive director of the campaign. Shanley explained that the college works with its donors to match their priorities with the college's needs in all fundraising matters, and that Middlebury does not accept every gift offered because of conflicts between requested limitations and the college's need for future flexibility.

"We do strike a balance between how much restriction we can feasibly follow through on versus how specific a donor wants to get," Shanley said. "What we're trying to do is match donor goals with institutional goals and find ways to bring those things together."

Middlebury will also use the funds to improve academics by creating greater training and professional development for faculty, as well as funding sabbatical opportunities and elevating the capabilities of current professors.

"It's making sure that we've got great people teaching you the coursework that is compelling. On top of that, we also have to make sure that our professors are constantly reinventing themselves, giving them the nourishment they need to be at the very top of their game," said

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ISO celebrates International Week with student performances, workshops and business panel

By CAROLINE JIAO
Contributing Writer

COURTESY PHOTO

International Week ran from Oct. 23 to 28 to highlight the diverse cuisine, culture and people that make up the ISO.

Each year, the International Student Organization (ISO) celebrates the diverse and rich cultures of the international community at Middlebury with a designated International Week.

Centering around this year's theme of "Radiance," the week of Oct. 23 to Oct. 28 was filled with a series of events organized by ISO members. The week's events included a business panel; poetry and calligraphy workshops; and food-focused programs such as a Haitian feast at a local resident's home and an international food festival. Performances included an international karaoke night and the beloved annual ISO show, which featured dance and fashion performances.

The international community on campus has thrived through a robust tradition of ISO events, which offer underclassmen support through a strong student network, according to Vlera Hasani '24.5, one of the speakers on the ISO business panel.

"It is so rewarding and satisfying to see this event being carried through the years and feeding back into future generations of the international community," Hasani said.

Professional development events through the ISO such as the business panel began two years ago. As a panelist, Hasani shared her experience applying and being recruited as a summer analyst for sales and trading at Citibank.

"It is way more difficult for international students to get jobs and internships no matter what industry you're applying to," Hasani said.

Along with fellow panelists Adil Alvi '24, an incoming investment banking analyst at Goldman Sachs, and Huthefa Maalim '24.5, who served as a summer associate at Boston Consulting Group, where he will work again this summer, Hasani shared information and advice on the application process, networking strategies and personal experiences in an effort to help other international students navigate their own career and internship journeys.

"It felt rewarding to be able to reciprocate and to pass on the generosity I've received in the past by helping other international students and giving them some advice I wish I'd known," Hasani said.

Anna Matsuzawa '27, a first-year student who attended the business panel, expressed her appreciation for the event and hoped that the tradition will continue in future years. "All the panelists experienced different things within the field of business and consulting, so I was able to get to know different paths, but they explained them very precisely so that I could understand the differences and the processes very well," Matsuzawa said.

Coming together and learning from other international students about traditional arts and practices was one of the main goals of the week's events. Meïssa Atmani '26 shared her excitement about organizing a henna workshop with the Muslim Students Association and co-hosting the Arabic calligraphy workshop with the Arabic house.

"As a board member of WANAS (West Asian and North African Students), it was so sweet seeing so many different calligraphy stations that

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New engraved pavers at BiHall funded by medical institute grant celebrate diverse scientific achievements

By IAN CURRY
Contributing Writer

The existing twelve engraved pavers outside of BiHall that honor individuals who made significant scientific discoveries have been joined by 24 new pavers recognizing an additional 25 innovators.

The original twelve included the likes of Einstein, Darwin and Hubble, many of whose innovations during the College's first two centuries of existence had a notable impact on humanity. Other than Marie Curie, however, all of the twelve individuals originally represented are white men, according to an Oct. 16 email from Rick Bunt, associate dean of sciences.

Inaugurated on Oct. 25, the new pavers intend to increase representation of the diversity of the sciences. Of the 25 new individuals, seventeen are women and eleven are people of color. They also feature a greater time span of scientific discovery, from Ibn Sina's eleventh century Canon of Medicine encyclopedia to Emmanuelle Carpentier and Jennifer Doudna's twenty first century research on gene editing.

The new pavers are one aspect of a larger grant that Middlebury received from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute this past spring. Spanning six years and awarded to 104 institutions in total, the grant is aimed at strengthening STEM programs, including math, technology, science and engineering, at the recipient colleges and universities.

Middlebury plans to use the funds to make changes that will provide a more equitable and inclusive experience in the sciences, according to the college's announcement of the grant in March 2023.

The college will receive $531,600 spread over the next six years to support a range of improvements to STEM departments, including faculty development, student engagement and curriculum change.

"In collaboration with our partner institutions, we hope this work will serve as a model for higher education, which must move in this direction for equity and inclusion," President Laurie Patton said in the announcement. "Our faculty meet frequently and regularly to discuss STEM pedagogy. I know those conversations are creative and insightful, and that deep commitment has paid off."

Middlebury's STEM pedagogy group, an informal group of science faculty members who have been meeting to support STEM teaching for years, spearheaded the proposal for the Howard Hughes grant. According to Bunt, who helped lead the grant proposal, the pedagogy group is made up of a number of younger faculty members looking to learn new ways of teaching STEM courses.

"A lot of them have the energy and creative ideas for new ways to rethink things, so this group is actively part of the grant going forward," Bunt told The Campus.

Howard Hughes Medical Institute research indicates that less than half of the nearly one million students who begin college each year intending to study STEM actually end up completing a STEM degree. The institute's Inclusive Excellence 3 initiative, the program from which Middlebury received its grant, seeks to combat this loss of talent, particularly among first generation college students and students from historically underprivileged backgrounds, according to the grant announcement.

"If you're in a classroom with people you perceive as being very different from you, either in ability, experience, or background, do you feel like you belong in that classroom? Or even in that profession? We believe we are able to do things because we have seen people we identify with doing those things. That's what the pavers, and the fund in general want to facilitate," Bunt said.

Bunt added that Middlebury has become known for having strong, well-rounded STEM programs. The hope, however, is that this grant will help make Middlebury be known for motivating and supporting its students' interests in STEM fields throughout their entire college experience.

He said that by expanding the college's support infrastructure for STEM students, the grant will hopefully make the science community at Middlebury more diverse.

"Students coming from certain schools tend to have had more preparation for college than those who come from others, especially underfunded high schools. This isn't fair. We want to be able to support students when they face fundamental roadblocks, and help them find the most effective ways to study and transfer their knowledge early on," Bunt said.

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute asked the institutions in Middlebury's Learning Communities cluster of grant recipients, which included 14 other colleges and universities, to guide their use of the funding based on the question "what processes and methods foster institutional change toward more inclusive and equitable introductory STEM education across a range of institutional types?"

While specific plans for the rest of the funding have not been solidified yet, Bunt said STEM faculty are looking at opportunities to repurpose parts of Armstrong Library in BiHall to include a dedicated support center for STEM students, like what the Center for Teaching, Learning and Research in Davis Family Library offers.

"We want to create a space where students know they can go if they're having difficulties, whether it be with just an assignment or the entire course. Other universities have STEM focused learning centers like this," Bunt said. "It's been seen that the additional support facilitates a space where students can connect with other students and faculty members and receive more effective support."

In the end, Bunt said, Middlebury students should be able to find a pathway to do well in more challenging courses, rather than feeling overwhelmed and unsupported.

"We need to be able to provide the resources so that everyone has the opportunity to take a hard course and feel a sense of accomplishment when they succeed," Bunt added.

The celebration of the new pavers outside BiHall on Oct. 25 honored not only past scientific advancements, but also the positive changes that Middlebury strives to create on campus with the help of the new Howard Hughes Medical Institute grant.

CLUB SPORTS STRUGGLE TO OBTAIN FUNDING DESPITE RECORD TOTALS FROM PROUD TO BE A PANTHER CAMPAIGN

By ANABELLE LAPP
Contributing Writer

THEA VOLPP

This year's Proud to be a Panther fundraising event raked in a record-shattering $713,579 from 3,124 different donors, nearly doubling last year's total of $387,651. Despite this record haul...

Occurring each fall, Proud To Be a Panther is the major fundraising opportunity for Middlebury varsity and club sports teams. Thirty five different teams participated in this year's fundraiser, with the club crew team bringing in the most money at $87,186.

In this year's fundraiser, 57% of donations came from alumni, 21% from parents of students, 6% from friends, 5% from students and 2% from faculty and staff.

Fundraisers like Proud to be a Panther are particularly important for club sports teams, as they receive substantially less funding from the college compared to varsity teams. "It's the biggest fundraising opportunity for club sports. We get donations from alumni and parents and friends of the program," Peter Herman '24, a captain of the crew team, said.

Middlebury's club sports teams also rely on funding allocated to them by the Student Activities Office (SAO), according to Annie Delehanty, the assistant director for student organizations and club sports. The student activity fee, included in each student's tuition, is the primary source of funding for all student organizations and clubs on campus, including club sports

The Student Government Association (SGA) Finance Committee allocates a portion of this funding to the SAO, who is then in charge of dividing up the money amongst the club sports teams to meet each team's budget needs as adequately as possible.

Delehanty noted that each club sports team has an operating account as well as a gift account or endowment. The SAO gives money specifically to a team's operating account, which is meant to cover any expenses necessary to maintain a club's basic operations, such as registering for and traveling to competitions and purchasing basic equipment.

Money from external fundraising like the Proud to Be a Panther Fundraiser goes into a team's gift account, which is used by teams to cover extra expenses that their SAO-allotted funding does not cover. These expenses often include the cost of lodging when traveling for competition and the cost of the club's social programming.

Each spring, club teams submit their budget proposal for the upcoming year with a breakdown of their operational needs. Members of the SAO then meet to review these proposals and work to fairly distribute funding to each of the club sports teams based on the financial needs of the teams in conjunction with the amount of money available to allocate, according to Delehanty.

"We don't want any barriers to sport, so we try to do everything in our power to fund each team the absolute best we can, but there's never enough money to fully match every team's budget proposal," Delehanty said.

Delehanty explained that SAO divides club sports teams into three tiers. Tier one and two teams are teams that do not parallel a varsity sport on campus, whereas tier three consists of teams that do replicate varsity teams. Tier one teams require a paid coach due to danger inherent to practicing the sport while tier two teams do not. Both tier one and tier two teams are allowed to have two nine-week competitive seasons within an academic year, while tier three teams have only one competitive season in addition to one recreational season within a year.

In regards to how the tier system affects the amount of money the SAO grants to each club sports team, Delehanty said that tier three teams generally receive less funding due to only having one competitive season, which cuts down their travel and competition expenses. They are also ineligible to participate in the Proud to be a Panther fundraising, she added.

Lenox Herman '24.5, captain and former treasurer of women's club volleyball, a tier three sport, noted the difficulty in receiving sufficient funding as a tier three team. She said that if the team were allocated more funding, aside from updating their current equipment and giving her teammates more opportunities to compete by registering for more tournaments, she would aim to remove financial barriers for entry to the club team and have more social and community-building activities.

"They've recently implemented a new rule that students must wear court shoes when playing in the gym. Not everyone has the resources to buy shoes specifically for volleyball, so it would be nice if our school funding could cover these costs. Also, it would be awesome to have funding for socials and other activities because I think that's a huge part of what it means to be on a team. Sometimes it feels like we only get a restricted version of that within club sports," Lenox Herman said.

Delehanty expressed her awareness of some students' dissatisfaction with the tier system, and shared that she is in the process of helping form a new advisory board to help address the disconnect between club sports teams and the SAO. With the advisory board, each club sports team will send one member of the organization to a monthly meeting to discuss things happening in the club sports community, problems they're facing or things they want to change.

"We're going to work together to try to solve all of that, whether that's financing, whether that's field space, whether that's implementing new training. We're working with teams to continue to rise through the tier system if they want to," Delehanty said.

Club teams remain committed to running their sports, with as much funding as possible.

"As a crew team, we put a lot of effort into minimizing financial barriers for entry into the sport, and club sport funding helps make that reality for our team and other teams too, like equestrian and sailing. You can try all these cool things that you might not have a chance to try elsewhere because the school decided it's worthwhile to put money towards students' interests. I think the campus would be a much less interesting place without that," Peter Herman said.

Sustainability Spotlight: The Climate Action Program

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Senior Sports Editor

Climate awareness. Environmental advocacy. Green initiative. Whatever you choose to call it, it is near impossible to disentangle Middlebury College from the environmental movement. Since creating the nation's first environmental studies department in 1965, Middlebury has long been at the vanguard of conversations on climate change and environmental systems. Now, with $7 million in donations from the Erol Foundation and NextWorld Philanthropies, Middlebury looks to take the next step forward with the expansion of the Climate Action Program.

Launched in the fall of 2020, the Climate Action Program — formerly known as the Climate Action Capacity Project — was created to give students the opportunity to pursue their own passions with regard to climate change as well as to broaden its discussion on campus. Following the initial setback of the Covid-19 pandemic, the program has grown in recent years to include a series of speakers and a large fellowship program. With the new gifts, however, the program is poised to take its next steps to include more people of varying backgrounds across the campus and beyond.

"We're really intentional about making this a space for people who are maybe already deeply involved, but also for people who haven't yet found their place in climate engagement on campus," said Minna Brown '07, founder and director of the Climate Action Program. "So how can we provide breadth, depth and scaffolding for that? We want to see students deeply engaged with their work and we want to meet them where they are."

The Climate Action Fellowship program, which provides funding opportunities for students to pursue internships and community projects of their choosing as a part of the broader Climate Action Program, has run every year since the program's inception. Now hosting its fourth cohort, the fellowship includes project work across many disciplines, ranging from researching insects in local forests to analyzing corporate air pollution.

The majority of students currently in the fellowship begin their work as a summer intern with an external organization before carrying their work into the academic year. The cohort draws from a diverse array of academic majors and includes students specializing in environmental studies, economics, computer science and gender, sexuality and feminist studies.

"At the end of the day, we need people in small NGOs but we need people with knowledge of large financial markets too," Brown said. "We need people going out there and studying ice sheets and artists and faith leaders and teachers. Every single career path and discipline has an opportunity and a responsibility to recognize how deeply we need to transform our society."

Marlow Saucier '24 is in their second year as a Climate Action Fellow and currently works with the Addison County Relocalization Network after a previous internship with the Susu Community Farm in Newfane, Vt. Saucier highlighted the importance of the fellowship funding because it allows students to explore opportunities that otherwise may go unnoticed or unfulfilled, and explained that the fellowship encourages students to choose their own pursuit about which they are passionate about.

"Oftentimes, what the Climate Action Project does is fund internships outside of Middlebury's radar with smaller organizations," Saucier said. "They work with places that cannot pay an intern on their own or with places that have a project where it would be really useful to have a student worker. And the opportunity to get paid for this work that is important to you lets you know that this work is also important to the community and is valued by someone, which I really appreciate."

The fellowship is far from the only facet of the Climate Action Program. Since 2020, the program has included a series of open lectures and conversations from a diverse range of figures in the environmental movement. It has hosted lectures from established authors like Naomi Klein and Middlebury's Schumann Distinguished Scholar in Environmental Studies Bill McKibben, talks from policy experts like Ayanna Johnson and dynamic discussions like Earth Week at Middlebury and the Environmental Studies Colloquium. The majority of these guest speakers and events have been selected through student input.

"We ask our students [for] the voices that are most exciting to them," Brown said. "And really, we want to make sure we hear the voices of marginalized folks and the voices of people who are underrepresented on this campus."

In addition to lectures and dialogues, the Climate Action Program has arranged a variety of other events such as film screenings, art seminars and career workshops. While a significant amount of work has already been done with regard to events focused on employment , Brown said she hopes to see even more career conversations by including more voices from alumni.

"We've done a variety of things with the CCI already, and they've been really helpful, so we're working on getting even more of an alumni network up and running," Brown said. "We want to give alumni the opportunity to raise their hands and say, 'I'm doing this work and I absolutely want to help.'"

As the Climate Action Program expands and evolves, one enduring tenet is the value it places on community. Whether it is relationships being built between faculty and students, bridges formed across universities or friendships fostered amongst peers, the Climate Action Project continues to place a tight-knit community at the core of its mission.

"Being a young person in the climate world can feel really hopeless sometimes," Saucier said. "But being surrounded by people that care deeply and who are also committing time and energy to this cause is really inspiring."

MINNA BROWN/COURTESY PHOTO

The Climate Action Fellowship is in its fourth year and has featured 48 fellowships since its inception in 2020.

Facilities announces Stewart Hall renovations, finalizes new first-year residence hall project timeline

COURTESY PHOTO

Construction on the new first-year residence hall is operating on schedule and will continue through the winter. The project is slated to finish by spring 2025 at which point construction will begin on Stewart Hall.

By ELLIE TRINKLE
Staff Writer

If the new first-year dorm is finished by spring break of 2025, first-year students living in Stewart Hall next year will move into the new building for the remainder of the semester in order to allow for construction on Stewart to begin, Middlebury announced in an Oct. 23 email.

The college broke ground on the new first-year residence hall, which will be located on the north side of Battell Beach, at the end of June. The $50 million residence hall will be four stories tall with 148 doubles and two singles.

If the new dorm is not completed in time for students to move over spring break, the dorm will open over the summer of 2025 and construction on Stewart will begin then as well.

"Planning and concept designs for a deep renovation of Stewart Hall have been underway for several years," AJ Place, associate dean of students for Residential Life wrote in an email to The Campus. "Stewart is in need of updating a number of items including windows, bathrooms, and hopefully the addition of an elevator to make the building more accessible."

In addition to improving the outdated facilities in Stewart, the renovation project will also support Middlebury's Energy2028 initiative by installing more energy efficient heating systems.

"The [Stewart renovation] project is only in its planning and development infancy and the full scope of work has yet to be determined," Norm Cushman, associate vice president for operations, wrote in an email to The Campus. "Preliminarily, it would be desirable to start work after the completion of the new residence hall. The expected duration of work will be determined once the full renovation program is better understood."

The construction on the new residence hall is running on schedule and is moving on to the next phase, steel erection, which will allow for the placement of precast concrete decking. Facilities plans to continue construction during the winter months, according to Mike Moser, director of Facilities Services.

"Looking forward, the structural construction elements of the new building are coming together well over the next few months," Moser wrote in an email to The Campus.

During the initial phases of the construction of the first-year dorm this fall, students living in Coffrin Hall experienced noise problems as site excavation began early in the morning. This led facilities to reevaluate the logistics of the project in order to accommodate student requests.

"Facilities directed the construction crews/company to not start the loudest projects first thing in the morning," Place wrote. "There are also earplugs for students available in the Res Life office in Ross. We appreciate students' patience during this project."

When the new first-year dorm opens, Battell Hall will no longer be a first year residence hall. Instead, the space will become an art museum, as a part of a larger effort to enhance the arts at Middlebury. Plans for the renovation of Battell have not been finalized.

"We will keep students informed about the project as it progresses and share information about any potential impacts as appropriate," Place wrote. "We are committed to keeping students and our whole campus informed while this exciting building is being constructed!"

MIDDLEBURY ADDRESSES ISRAEL-GAZA WAR THROUGH CONVERSATIONS, CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

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COURTESY PHOTO

Chaplains from the Scott Center during Oct. 25's Interfaith panel

Chaplain Katie Runde Sanchez, Affiliate Humanist Chaplain and scholar-in-residence Bill Vitek and Associate Laboratory Professor Marc Lapin from the Environmental Studies department. The panel was moderated by Associate Professor of Environmental Studies Rebecca Gould, who was formerly a part of the Religion department at Middlebury.

In an interview with The Campus, Stillman described the panel's motivations and the role of the Scott Center in light of the recent violence in Israel and Gaza.

"We decided to use this time to explore religious perspectives on these different topics and relate them to what is going on in Israel and Gaza," Stillman said. "It was a bigger idea about where different religious traditions come into conversation around these ideas."

Stillman explained that the panel sought to offer an alternative model of discussion about contemporary violence by providing an empathetic and responsive space for sharing and discussing as opposed to the rigid structure of academic, fact-based debate. The mission of the Scott Center, and of religious dialogue more broadly, is threatened by the practice of examining all discourse through a political lens and always assigning political consequence to what is said or discussed, she added.

"I almost see our role like medics in war, and we're treating everybody on campus regardless of where they fall on this issue," she added. "I just want us to be able to continue doing that."

Muslim Advisor and interfaith advisor Zahra Moeini echoed Stillman's sentiments about the panel, emphasizing the importance of justice for those facing structural inequalities and tragedies.

Drawing on the teachings of her Muslim faith and her experience as a religious advisor, Moeini sought to provide a validation of all human life through the panel, regardless of background, religious orientation or relationship to the violence in the Middle East.

"I am deeply grateful for our panel," Moeni wrote in an email to The Campus. "It was a much needed and powerful presence in these chaotic times – our panelists' diverse voices rechanneled a global grief into a call for action, unity, and re-humanization."

Moeini added that moving forward, she hopes the Middlebury community will continue to engage with moral issues in a productive and diligent fashion, and will be proactive in combating discriminatory or marginalizing behavior.

"We thankfully have statements as well as resources that highlight antisemitic bigotry on campus," she wrote. "We must also formally recognize and condemn Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian bias and bigotry that threatens doubly marginalized groups like Muslims and/or Palestinians through formal statements and educational workshops. I hope we collectively and urgently take [the] lead on these initiatives."

The Kathryn Wasserman Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation, one of the co-sponsors of the panel, is an initiative working across the college, the Middlebury Institute, Bread Loaf and the schools abroad to rethink and re-design how we engage with conflict.

"Conflict transformation begins with the recognition that destructive conflicts can ruin relationships and destroy communities," Sarah Stroup, associate professor of Political Science and executive director of the collaborative told The Campus. "Conflict transformation focuses on trying to build our knowledge, skills and capacities so that we can move from more destructive dynamics into more constructive dynamics in conflict situations."

Stroup said she believes that in light of the war in Israel and Palestine, the collaborative plays an essential in ensuring that Middlebury addresses the violence with compassion and respect. She added that conflict transformation is not an immediate, snap-of-the-fingers fix, but rather an invitation to seek methods of changing conflict from a destructive interaction to a constructive experience.

"Like what we are witnessing in Israel and Gaza, the ones suffering the most in global conflicts are the ones with the least amounts of power," Stroup said. "The first thing to do is to respond with compassion, and to meet people where they are."

The collaborative is reaching out to support Middlebury students, families and community members endangered by the conflict, and hopes to provide not only a resource with tools to modify conflict, but an environment devoted to ensuring the safety of all who are affected by the violence, Stroup said.

For Sebnem Gumuscu, associate professor of political science and head of Conflict Transformation in undergraduate life, the Israel-Palestine conflict is an important professional and academic area of focus. Gumuscu teaches four political science courses on the topic — Contemporary Conflicts in the Middle East, International Politics of the Middle East, Politics of the Middle East and North Africa and Israel-Palestine Conflict.

In addressing the conflict through an academic lens, Gumuscu said she and her colleagues provide the factual complement to the space for vulnerability, expression and healing that chaplains at the Scott Center offer.

"We need affinity groups and academic spaces, and we need support groups that we receive and enter into as community members," she said. "This is not just one-size-fits-all, and it cannot work like that."

Conversation informed by conflict transformation principles can bridge the gap in the battle between contested facts and emotional responses, Gumuscu said. "Dialogue is not an affinity space, and neither is it an academic space. It is somewhere in-between, and you can trust that no one will judge you in that space," she explained. "But you must keep in mind that that space is for sharing, not persuasion."

Looking forward, Gumuscu said she hopes to continue addressing the conflict both in her classroom and in structured extracurricular spaces. "We can have these difficult conversations, not only about Israel and Palestine, but about other parts of the world, and that requires skills and knowledge that we build together," she said.

The conflict transformation collaborative hosted a structured dialogue session over dinner this past Monday, Oct. 30 in the Mahaney Arts Center (MAC) to facilitate discussion about the war in Israel and Gaza.

Stroup and Khuram Hussain, associate professor of education and vice president of equity and inclusion, provided opening remarks to the dialogue, sharing their confidence in the event's ability to generate productive conversations.

The dinner's 45 attendees, which included students, staff and faculty, were divided into small groups of five to six participants to engage in structured dialogue for about an hour. The conversations were moderated by Middlebury faculty and staff trained in Conflict Transformation methodology, including restorative practices and the principles of structure dialogue.

Before the structured dialogues formally began, participants were asked to reflect upon their personal experiences and relationships to the conflict, as well as their concerns about engaging in a conversation like this about a controversial subject. For each of the three main conversational prompts in the dialogue, participants were given time to silently gather their thoughts and write notes before each person was allowed two minutes to respond in their small group. As the event went on, the rules and time requirements of the conversations became more elastic, giving participants the chance to guide the conversation and respond in real time to comments and questions raised by peers. Each group was allowed to end their conversation on their own time, when the members felt they had arrived at a natural stopping point.

"It went relatively well," Griffin Fill '23.5, a participant in the dialogue said. "It was very meta — so meta that at some points I don't think we were talking about much of anything, but it is an exceedingly difficult topic."

MIDDLEBURY LAUNCHES FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN AIMING TO RAISE $600 MILLION BY 2028

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Dan Courcey, vice president for advancement.

Courcey clarified that this funding will be directed to enhancing current professors, and that while opportunities for expanding the size of the faculty exist in the future, that will not be the use of endowed funding raised in this campaign.

Middlebury also hopes to expand experiential learning opportunities such as Oratory Now and the Innovation Hub to enhance student life on campus. Another priority is enhancing internship and career opportunities for current and postgraduate students in order to help them pursue employment or further education. The college plans to ensure that every graduate of Middlebury has received training in conflict transformation, cross-cultural literacy, data analysis and climate issues, according to Jami Black, associate vice president for advancement and co-executive director of the campaign.

Another goal of the fundraising is to create endowed funding for assistant coach positions for all Middlebury varsity teams, a priority for the college to enhance student athlete experiences and improve compensation for staff in one area of the college.

"We're one of the top NCAA DIII programs in the country. So we've got to figure out a way to pay our people better and to have a sustained level of funding for the athletic program and the assistant coaches," Courcey added.

The campaign also plans to dedicate funds to various renovations and the construction of new buildings on campus, including the recently renovated Johnson Memorial Building and ongoing updates to athletic facilities such as the Snow Bowl. Additional projects currently in the design phase include a quantitative learning center in BiHall and a new art museum Battell Hall once the new first-year residence hall is completed.

Meeting the goal of 85% of alumni engagement requires connecting with an additional 4,000 to 5,000 undergraduate alumni who are currently not engaged with the college in any way, according to Courcey. He described that goal as difficult yet integral to the campaign's goal of broadening college interactions beyond the 50-60% of alumni who engage in any given year.

"This [campaign] is about sending a statement about Middlebury: what it means, where it wants to be, what it wants to do. But it's also about engaging our constituency, making a statement about this place and this community, and inviting our alumni into that conversation," Courcey said.

Courcey also explained that the college intends to create engagement through various methods other than donations, such as alumni interviews with prospective students, having conversations and networking with current students, attending events like class reunions and creating affinity-based programs for alumni with similar interests, experiences or identities.

"It's not purely just check-writing, it's opening up your heart and opening up your spirit, your home... to Middlebury, beyond the economics for what the campaign stands for," Courcey said.

Shanley acknowledged that the alumni engagement goal is ambitious, but stressed its value to the college overall and building a stronger Middlebury community, including funding opportunities at Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey.

"It is indeed an ambitious goal, but it's one that we are pursuing, I think, for all the right reasons," she said. "It's really important for our community, it's important for this campaign and it's important for the life of the institution."

In the past week, the college received a $38 million unrestricted endowment gift that brought the campaign's total to $383 million. This donation can be used for any purpose by the college, according to Black, who called it "the best gift you can get as an institution" due to its potential to benefit a wide range of students.

That recent donation has brought the college's total fundraising close to the intermediate goal of $400 million, which Courcey said the college aims to raise by June 30, 2024. The ongoing process of fundraising and increasing alumni engagement will span at least the next five years.

"It's been an extraordinary journey, and we want to bring as many members of our community into the conversation as possible," Patton said at the campaign launch.

Editor's note: Editor in Chief Maggie Reynolds '24 contributed reporting to this article.

President Laurie Patton stands with performers from the Moth-Up event held as a part of the campaign launch last Thursday.

HISTORIC MARKER COMMEMORATING FREDERICK DOUGLASS' VISIT TO MIDDLEBURY UNVEILED

By EDITH MAUCH
Contributing Writer

COURTESY PHOTO/JENNIFER NUCEDER

The plaque was unveiled Sept. 22.

A historic marker in Court Square in downtown Middlebury commemorating Frederick Douglass's visit to the town in 1843 was recently revealed by Professor of History Emeritus Bill Hart and Town Manager Kathleen Ramsey. The ceremony took place 180 years after his visit, on Sept. 22, 2023.

Hart proposed the installation of a plaque commemorating Douglass' visit to the Middlebury selectboard last year, which they approved by a unanimous vote.

"I urge the town of Middlebury and the state of Vermont to acknowledge officially this critically important moment in our history," Hart wrote in his proposal for the plaque to the town selectboard.

Douglass' visit to Middlebury took on greater significance because it was the first stop on the New England Anti-Slavery Society's '100 Conventions' tour, which aimed to foster opposition to slavery among northerners in the 1840s, according to Hart's proposal.

Douglass' reception in Middlebury was far from welcoming, according to Hart. Douglass even referenced the initial hostility he faced here in his autobiography, "Life and Times of Frederick Douglass," stating that his reception was initially "intensely bitter and violent," mostly due to the reactions of anti-abolitionist Middlebury College students. However, as Hart mentioned in his speech at the unveiling ceremony, while he was visiting Middlebury Douglass was able to change the attitudes of many with his speech about his enslavement and act of self-emancipation.

Yet this speech had not been previously commemorated in the Middlebury area until now, despite Hart's long standing desire for some recognition of the event's significance, according to reporting from the Addison Independent.

"I believe the marker is important for how passersby — Middlebury residents and visitors alike — understand the history of the spaces they move on and through, particularly the town of Middlebury and its relationship to the broader histories of enslavement and anti-Blackness, as well as struggles against these," Daniel Silva, associate professor of Luso-Hispanic Studies and director of the Twilight Project, wrote in an email to The Campus.

The historic marker also helps to bring awareness to Alexander Twilight's graduation from Middlebury College in 1823, which was recently commemorated at the 2023 Clifford Symposium. Twilight was the first documented African American to earn a degree from an American college. After graduation, he went on to become an ordained minister, educator and member of the Vermont House of Representatives, making him the only African American ever to be elected to a state legislature prior to the Civil War, according to the Addison Independent.

"I want those at the symposium to not only learn more about Twilight and his accomplishments, but also to think about race more creatively and more critically. And I hope in thinking about race in more complex ways, we as a society move away from viewing 'Whiteness' as a norm — as the standard — by which we assign racial identity to others, especially biracial individuals," Hart told the Addison Independent. This is particularly relevant given the fact that Hart believes Twilight to be about a quarter Black, and never identified as such during his time at Middlebury making his racial identity a point of interest to some invested in his legacy.

"I think if Douglass could have been alive these last 20 years, he would have thought, 'This is the Vermont I know.' I think Douglass would have felt affirmed in his original understanding and belief of what Vermont and Vermonters stood for," Hart said in the same interview.

Silva noted that the insularity of Middlebury may act as a barrier for understanding Vermont's histories with racism and white supremacy, both of which Douglass encountered when he visited and spoke at Middlebury.

"In this regard, I hope the marker makes passersby think not just of the anti-Blackness of Douglass's time, but also how anti-Blackness is manifested in so many ways today," Silva wrote. "I hope the plaque also invites people to ponder broader investments in whiteness, particularly whiteness in Vermont as a settler colony that continues to hinge on Indigenous dispossession and forms of Black unfreedom, locally and globally."

MIDDLEBURY MAPLE RUN 2023
Vermont's "Sweetest" Half Marathon!
HALF MARATHON,
TEAM RELAY & 3-MILE FUN RUN
SUNDAY NOV 5, 2023
MIDDLEBURY, VT
Still time to enter, but if you can't run, consider being a volunteer to:
• hand out drink cups at one of 4 aid stations and cheer on the runners (about 30 minutes);
• help set up the start-finish area (about an hour)
* help monitor road traffic at the start of Race on South Street (about 30-45 minutes).
If interested, email christy@addisonindependent.com
Support your friends and the community — volunteer!
What makes it so sweet?
•Beautiful scenic routes with views of the Green Mountains and Adirondacks.
•A mix of trail (10%), paved (45%), and dirt roads (45%) for the half marathon; all paved for 3-mile fun run.
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WELL-ORGANIZED. GREAT SWAG. TOP FINISHERS RECEIVE VERMONT MAPLE SYRUP!
Form a 2-person team (6.5 miles each) and compete for team honors!
Registration is open at
MiddleburyMapleRun.com
Sweet socks for ALL registrants!

The Residence at Otter Creek holds holiday food drive for HOPE

By JULIA PEPPER
Senior Local Editor

A holiday food drive for the local organization Helping Overcome Poverty's Effects (HOPE) is ongoing at The Residence at Otter Creek, a senior living community on Lodge Road Middlebury. The charity drive began on Oct. 23 and will continue through Dec. 31.

The food drive is one of the living community's frequent charitable events. The community has charitable drives every fiscal quarter, according to Tracy Van Hoven, the facility's sales and marketing director.

The last charitable drive hosted by the living community was a school supply drive for the Mary Hogan Elementary School. The charity events enable the facility and its members to connect with the local community, as they can donate items or checks to support the drive or set up a fund for donations.

Middlebury residents can also stop in at the living community to drop off supplies, in addition to the efforts of staff working there to support the charity drives.

According to Van Hoven, many staff and residents in the senior living community grew up in the area, and some people are connected to Addison County through their own time at Middlebury College.

"We've got over 140 residents here who are connected with the region in some way," she said. "It's always been an important part of our mission to give back to the community. Not only to focus on our residents pulling together, but also to pull in the larger community."

In addition to food drives, other charity drives at the living community have included holiday gifts and items of clothing. The facility hosted a coat drive around this time last year, which enabled them to donate many coats in their possession that were not being worn.

The living community has been connected to HOPE since 2008, a long standing relationship that Van Hoven credits to Courtney Allenson, senior reflections & engagement director at the facility and a native to the area. Allenson has helped the relationship between the senior living community and HOPE grow and is also responsible for many other fitness and outdoor recreation programs at the facility, Van Hoven said.

HOPE is one of the largest food shelves in the region, serving over 3000 people. According to the organization's website, they stock non-perishable foods as well as meat, milk, bread and eggs from local bakers and farmers.

HOPE also operates one of the largest resale stores in Vermont, offering a range of new and used furniture, household goods, clothing, collectibles, books, vinyl records and more. All profits from the store support HOPE's work in poverty relief.

"HOPE's mission is to improve the lives of low income people... by working with individuals to identify and secure the resources needed to meet their own basic needs," according to the organization's web page.

HOPE aims to ask people for what they need and provides those who need it with fresh food and much more. HOPE offers financial and job assistance, as well as "assistance to persons experiencing homelessness including camping gear, emergency hotel rooms, laundry vouchers, referrals and service coordination," the website states.

The living community's current food drive will last until the end of the year. New and sealed non-perishable food item donations are welcome and can be made in the facility's lobby, located at 350 Lodge Road in Middlebury.

THE RESIDENCE at Otter Creek
Holiday Community Food Drive
Please join us in donating non-perishable food items to HOPE and Addison County Food Shelf.
Please drop your donation in the basket.
KinneyDrugs
TRADER JOE'S

COURTESY PHOTO/TRACY VAN HOVEN
The food drive basket was already overflowing as of Oct. 31. Seen here with Rose Chevalier, the receptionist at The Residence.

LIV, LOVE, LOCAL: 51 MAIN

Liv, Love, Local is a column highlighting local businesses of Vermont, especially cafés and restaurants in the Middlebury area. Through interviews with owners, I want to highlight the specific successes and challenges that come along with small business ownership in Vermont, the hard work owners and employees put into these businesses, and how these spots serve as places to build community and connection.

By OLIVIA MUELLER
News Editor

As a collaborative restaurant and retail business, 51 Main has brought a new energy to a long-vacant space in Middlebury's downtown since opening last March. The space brings two businesses together under one roof: Everything Nice, a plant and home decor store which serves as a funding source for the Giving Fridge — a nonprofit founded by Bethanie Farrell — and Crooked Ladle Catering, a catering business owned by Jennifer and Loren Urban. The move to a shared space reflects the continuing evolution and growth of both businesses.

Crooked Ladle Catering started in 2019 as a food truck concept in collaboration with the Bobcat Cafe and Brewery in Bristol, Vt. and has since expanded to a full-fledged catering business. The business manages a commercial kitchen at 51 Main, where it not only carries out its catering operations, but also serves dinner Wednesday through Friday.

Crooked Ladle serves three types of plates: smalls, mediums and fancies, offering a wide range of dishes from classic shareables like nachos or fries to falafel gyros, bao buns and roasted octopus.

The Giving Fridge began as a two-week initiative in November and December of 2020 that provided meals during the holiday season, funded by community donations and houseplant sales. Since its founding, the fridge has gained nonprofit status and now offers a larger-scale permanent meal program. Everything Nice serves as a funding source for this expanded service by selling plants Wednesday through Saturday in the Battell Block space.

"It's grown very organically, adapting to both the need/demand and incoming support," Farrell wrote in an email to The Campus.

The Giving Fridge has provided over 30,000 meals to date, which cost $10 for those who are able to pay and free for low-income individuals. These meals are sourced from local restaurants with the goal of benefiting community members in a variety of circumstances. Whether program participants are experiencing financial insecurity, living with illness or disability, navigating the loss of a family contributor or dealing with any other reasons for food insecurity, the Giving Fridge aims to provide healthy, locally sourced options to those in need.

"Now in our third year, I think we've proven that we've added something special and valued to our downtown that caters to people from all walks of life in different ways," Farrell wrote. "Our goal is to help strengthen our local food system and economy."

As her initial two-year lease of a space on 66 Merchant's Row for the Giving Fridge came to an end, Farrell anticipated needing to wind down the program. Enter Jennifer and Loren Urban, who reached out to Farrell to inquire about using the commercial kitchen in the Giving Fridge space — a former diner — as Crooked Ladle Catering outgrew its former kitchen. Although the kitchen was no longer zoned commercially, the Urbans also mentioned the possibility of moving into 51 Main as a shared endeavor.

"That got my wheels turning, and it snapped me out of wind down mode," said Farrell. "That night, I found a note I'd made in my notebook from 2021 that just said 'Giving Kitchen.'" With the chance to realize a dream of Giving Fridge occupying a space with a wider reach not limited by the lack of a commercially zoned kitchen, Farrell and the Urbans landed on a concept to divide and conquer the development of their newly shared space.

"We would each maintain our own businesses... but share the lease and collaborate in various complementary ways," Farrell said in reference to their renovation plan. The Urbans built out the commercial kitchen, while Farrell updated the restaurant interior.

Looking forward to 2024, both Crooked Ladle Catering and Everything Nice are expanding their operations. Crooked Ladle Catering will add more restaurant hours to the weekly schedule, while Everything Nice recently launched an online store to widen their potential customer base to support expanding the Giving Fridge's programming.

COURTESY PHOTO/BILLY FARRELL
Owners Bethanie Farrell, Jennifer and Loren Urban share a space for their businesses at 51 Main.

While logistics and fundraising are consistently difficult for Farrell, the biggest challenge is meeting the demand that exists for the Giving Fridge with its small staff. The Giving Fridge team consists of five regular volunteers assisting with meal deliveries, and one other full-time employee, Amber Young, who joined recently and manages the retail plant sales for Everything Nice.

"The need for healthy prepared meals exceeds our current resources and so it feels like we're never able to do enough to help others," Farrell wrote. "Hearing and seeing the impact that this gesture has on our neighbors when they're feeling most vulnerable is constant motivation to keep working through the challenges."

Participants have sent heartfelt letters of gratitude for the services the Giving Fridge provides, responding not only to the thoughtful delivery but the nutritious options not reliably available through other meal assistance programs, according to Farrell.

"It keeps me up at night knowing that there are so many more people that we could be reaching if we had the resources," Farrell wrote. She described her efforts to continue the Giving Fridge's work, which include scouring grant databases, searching for partner organizations and inquiring through contacts to fundraise for future initiatives.

Sourcing for the 2024 operating budget will also expand its focus to corporate sponsors and individual donors, with the hope of creating a staffing budget to support a full-time team. Farrell still serves as a volunteer in order to prioritize the program's growth and search for reliable staff members.

In the coming year, both Crooked Ladle Catering and the Giving Fridge aim to spread the word about 51 Main as they continue to grow even further. Crooked Ladle Catering will expand restaurant operations to four days a week, including Saturdays, and will continue to host live music on Wednesday nights. Live music features local performers and genres including jazz, bluegrass, DJ sets and more.

The Giving Fridge will continue weekly meal deliveries on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and the organization plans to launch their first Giving Fridge automatic meal dispenser in November at the Middlebury Commons in collaboration with the Vermont Food Bank. If the first launch goes well, they plan to roll out additional fridges in 2024.

"This multi-use space is a unique concept that people are still trying [to] wrap their heads around, but I think it's just a matter of consistent messaging about what we each offer and all of the ways the Giving Fridge meal program is supported through our offerings," Farrell wrote. "When Everything Nice is open, some people walk up to the door and stop short, saying 'oh, you're a restaurant, I thought this was a plant shop!' and I say, 'it's both, come on in - shop, drink and dine!'"

Campus Flow

Op-Ed

Alex Takoudes *is a member of the class of 2024.5.*

Middlebury has a campus problem. While the majority of people might not notice some of the flaws with our campus, I believe that the physical layout of our sidewalks presents a logistical nightmare for lawn maintenance. By no means am I saying that the grounds crew that works day-in and day-out to pick up trash, mow the grass and clear the sidewalks is doing a bad job. They are what keeps this campus alive and beautiful. However, as I walk around campus, I notice some issues that are unique to Middlebury.

Missing Paths

The first issue is that there are some key connections missing between destinations. The photo above shows an example of a desire path — a route which has been naturally worked into the grass, but is not paved. Some notable examples are the connection from BiHall to Ross Dining Hall (in front of Hadley Hall), the diagonal route from Ross Dining Hall to Atwater Dining Hall and the route from Lang Hall to Atwater. But desire paths are inaccessible and impermanent solutions. For one, they cannot be cleared of snow during the wintertime, meaning they can become icy and unsafe. These paths are also not hard surfaces, meaning anyone who is injured or disabled would be forced to follow the existing but indirect network of sidewalks. They also create a low-point on the surface that water can erode, which is what we are seeing between Hadley and Milliken Hall.

What do all of these examples have in common? People want to take the quickest route from point A to point B, and no such route exists in these spaces, or the detour is significantly longer. I propose a simple solution to this problem, which is adding new paths to fill in these needed routes. I have drawn a map to illustrate these changes.

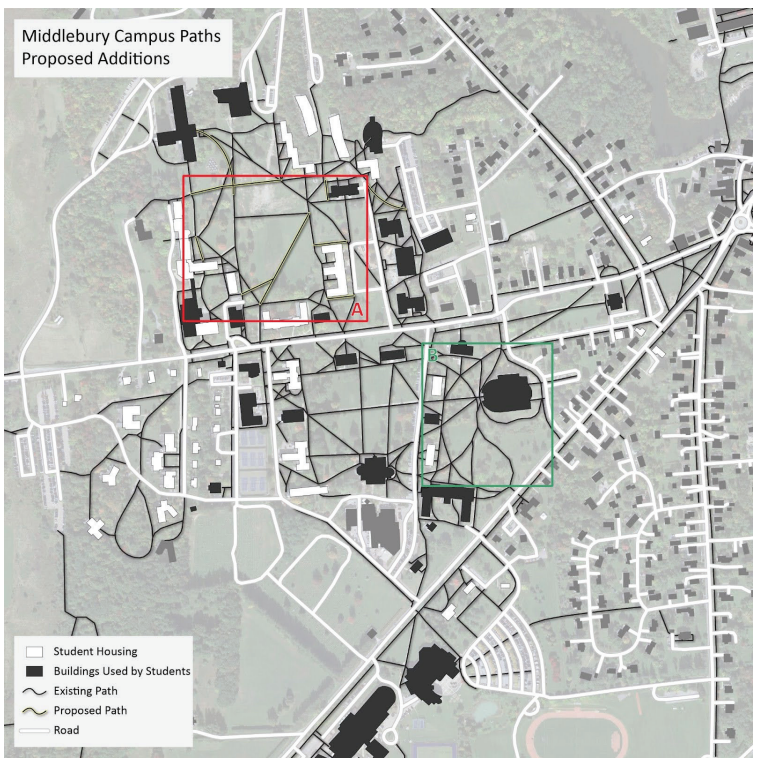
Intersections and Cutting Corners

The second issue is that Middlebury's path network lacks any natural form. Region A on the map above shows an example of straight paths connected through a series of intersections, as opposed to Region B, where the newer paths near Davis Family Library naturally flow with the direction of travel. This more natural form allows for fewer intersections and less congestion. While we don't exactly have a traffic issue, I'm sure some students have been in that awkward stand-off when trying to make a turn and you bump into someone coming the other direction.

Have you ever noticed the abundance of dead grass around path intersections? I suspect that this issue is caused by people cutting the corner to save a few seconds, which isn't necessarily bad, and I don't blame you. I think one solution would be to redesign the paths to be slightly wider and have fewer corners. I propose a more natural shape to the campus paths, which will lead to fewer intersections and reduce the need to cut corners.

COURTESY PHOTO/ALEX TAKOUDES

The desire path in front of Hadley Hall grows every year.



COURTESY PHOTO/ALEX TAKOUDES

MAP SHOWING EXISTING NETWORK OF PATHS AND PROPOSED ADDITIONS.

Sidewalk Material

When it does come time for the sidewalks to be renovated, a major consideration will be what material to use to pave the sidewalks. One option is concrete, the light gray stuff we have on campus, and a second option is asphalt, the black material commonly used for roads. In theory, concrete is supposed to last longer than asphalt and be more ADA friendly. Some sources say concrete can last up to 50 years, while others say it only lasts up to 30 years. Asphalt is supposed to be slightly cheaper and less durable than concrete. While both have their advantages and disadvantages, they will both inevitably deteriorate over time and require replacement.

Before considering which material might be better, we should first look at what other colleges in the area are using for sidewalk material. Based on my research, some schools like Williams College, University of Vermont and Dartmouth College use mostly concrete paths, while others, like Colby College, Bowdoin College, Bates College and Amherst College use mostly asphalt. While most wouldn't notice the differences in the materials, a keen observer can pick up on some subtle changes. For bicyclists, the concrete paths have a sharp curb, meaning if you ride off the sidewalk, it is much more difficult to get back on. Skateboarders and people on scooters instantly feel how difficult it is to ride on a concrete sidewalk. The small wheels don't handle unevenness and slow down over each crack in the concrete. Additionally, concrete has joints that allow the surfaces to move over time, which are prone to moving during the freeze-thaw cycles of Vermont winters.

As seen in the photo above, many of our concrete paths are falling apart and are in need of replacement. I propose a new network with a hybrid of concrete and asphalt paths. As long as the concrete is poured to a high standard, it shouldn't need maintenance for many years. With the asphalt, skateboarders can get around easier, there will be less cracks to trip on and its continuous surface will be easier to plow without catching a snow plow blade. These asphalt paths would be slightly wider and comprise the most highly trafficked routes, especially those used by facilities when driving. If you are doubting how the asphalt paths might look, I encourage you to check out a photo of Amherst's campus, and if you want an example of concrete paths, check out Boston College's campus.

Overall, Middlebury's campus is beautiful and well-maintained, but a few design flaws and lack of sidewalk maintenance has led to an unpleasant experience when walking to and from class or meals. With some slight changes and new materials, I believe we can turn the current maze of intersections into a cohesive system of walkways.

PEOPLE OR PLACE: MY CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF MIDDLEBURY

Op-ed

Gage Schrier *is a member of the class of 2024.5.*

SKILES ROBERTS-SALVADOR

My suitemate Vlera's entire life can be viewed through the river of postcards that run down her wall. Ask her about the 4"x6" print from the Musee d'Orsay in Paris, and you'll get an earful about her six-month-long battle with the common cold. Comment on her somewhat kitschy collection from Banff National Park, and she'll recall the days she was so tired of hearing English at boarding school that she refused to speak anything but Albanian.

Each year, her walls become more claustrophobic. Scrawled notes from roommates and cellophane tape clog any remaining white space. She tells time this way: adding another card every few months. I envy the linearity of the story her collage tells, for it disregards the unremarkable. Most of my days blend together, lacking the discernable purpose and distinction of a postcard-worthy event.

I hang no pictures in my room, only uninterpretable Ernst and Bosch paintings. I keep the postcards Vlera has gifted me in a shoe box, along with Christmas cards from my mother and a silver gelatin print of my two best friends, Atticus and Dylan.

If someone were to ask me to describe my Middlebury experience, I would inevitably talk about my friends. I can't keep track of the readings I've done, but I can see myself petering along the trusses of a railway bridge with Atticus and Dylan. I can see our legs swing over the water, hear globs of spit arc, whistle and thwack.

We are all an average of those we spend time with, repeaters of pilfered phrases and cooks of replicated meals. I've spent my first three years here with Atticus and Dylan, and in this way, the man I've become at Middlebury is thanks to them. I didn't need postcards to remind me of who I was becoming because the causes of my many neuroses stood before me, draped like modern Pietá's in ripped band t-shirts and handicraft haircuts.

This semester, I've found myself missing our Middlebury. Dylan is now in New York, getting his Masters, and Atticus is at Oxford, doing his worst Kerouac impression. I am still here, grabbing tea at Ross and fishing dinks out of the Middlebury River, but recently, I couldn't help but feel like my time at this school had ended. With three semesters left, I began obsessively planning my escape earlier this fall. I applied for almost one hundred jobs, looked into seeing if my extra high school credits could speed me past "Go," and get me out of a place where I increasingly felt like a visitor. I was caught in the liminal space between my Middlebury and what I thought to be the beginning of life: a Chelsea studio with an Ikea bed frame and exactly one fork, spoon and knife.

I must admit, I am not entirely out of this space. I feel the pull of Plato's cave every day. Yet, I have begun a new project. With the help of old friends like Vlera and some new ones, I aim to craft for myself a second coming of Middlebury. I am, at heart, a utilitarian, but my need to connect every action to some greater good often overwhelms me. I'm having to learn on the fly to trust that things naturally turn out okay for most Middlebury students. Regardless of intent, my time here must mean something more than the white space between postcards.

I've tried befriending new people with moderate success. As it turns out, it's never too late. A new friend, Griffin, tears me from my battered copy of "All the Pretty Horses" for night walks filled with debates on political theory. We pass trees I climbed with Dylan and talk about music I first listened to with Atticus. I treasure my friendship with Griffin and our anti-Trotskyist trots to the Knoll. Still, I can't help wishing Atticus and Dylan were here with me. But I can live with that.

Edvard Munch painted the same subjects hundreds of times, unable to excise ghosts from his palette. Many seniors perform a similar exercise, stitching new patterns onto familiar memorial canvases. Each rendition becomes less exciting. The parties are "dead," and the rumors that the butter chicken at Tindia cures a hangover have been disproved via randomized control trial. As we symbolically tread water, we may have an urge to abandon our current reality for something new and exciting. I don't want to discourage that: Munch's most famous piece"The Scream," was only a series of five. However, while we are still here, we must strive to find joy in our traditions and repetitions. Another Munch masterpiece, "The Kiss," is a reimagination of a centuries-old motif. This is all to say we still have time to make new memories and friends, and extract some purpose from our time, even if the pinnacle of our Middlebury experience is behind us. Perhaps I am naive, but with 2,800 students and 800 courses in the catalog, we need to look for love beyond past flings, friends beyond our suites and classes in departments unimportant to a Goldman interviewer. The things that give us meaning, either through pulling us closer to a goal or by helping us self-actualize, are fleeting.

Every generation has its Shakespeare; every man their Hamlet; every student their Middlebury. Don't be too quick to concretize what this place means to you. It may slip away.

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The Middlebury Campus

ONE YEAR SENIOR

Op-Ed

Beau Root *is a member of the class of 2024.*

I have only had one full year on Middlebury's campus, and I am a senior. Let me elaborate.

I started at Middlebury in the fall of 2019 and was only there until we all got sent home for Covid-19 in March 2020. The following year, I decided it would be best for me not to enroll for the spring semester because I didn't want to rush through my time at Middlebury and I didn't feel like going to school on a TV was what I wanted out of college. The 2021–2022 school year was finally my first and only full year on the Middlebury campus, and even then I lived off-campus because the only college housing available to me was at Breadloaf. I was abroad for the fall of 2022, and this fall I am once again not on campus because I want to graduate in the spring and get as much out of my Middlebury baseball career as I can. I have an internship this fall as well to which I commute about an hour and fifteen minutes both ways, so I'm staying plenty busy between driving, working and everything in between. That makes one full year within the Middlebury bubble, and it's something I feel lucky enough to have been able to pop throughout my four years.

Part of why I was so excited to attend Middlebury was to be in that bubble during the year — to be on campus and away from the real world that we would inevitably be part of after (what was supposed to be) four years. The thing many of us love about this school is also something that, at times, takes away from it: the lack of physical connection to the rest of the world. As you've all surmised from the precious summary, this will be my fifth year as a student here. Yes, I feel old. Yes, I miss being around everyone. But I'm sure this path was the right one for me, to not leave anything unfinished in my Middlebury career and to learn in the environments that I want to, not the ones I'm forced into.

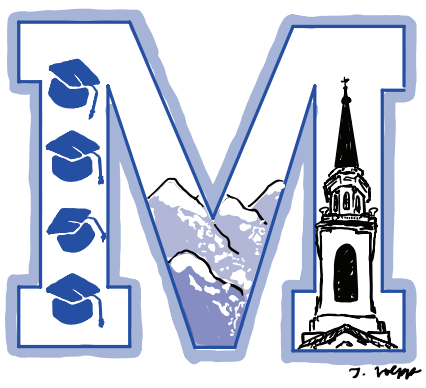
Like many students, I wanted to use my time in college to figure out what I want to do with my life. While studying is a great way to identify what I enjoy learning about, putting what I've learned into practice in a professional environment has been completely different. I'm learning technical skills and have now gotten more comfortable with them, more so than just trying to understand them in theory. Without this time away, I have a feeling I'd still have no sense of direction, but I've been able to use these job experiences and learn in situations outside of the comfort of a classroom.

I understand I'm lucky to be able to postpone my education by a semester, but I promise all of you that I'm not taking my time away from campus to sit around and do nothing. My job this fall is strenuous. Between the long days and a much longer commute than from Ross Dining Hall to the Athletic Center, I have not been getting nearly as much time to relax at home as I thought. I think about people I miss on campus, in addition to classes and missing spending time with the baseball team. Then I think about the future. With this, all my FOMO disappears knowing how much more I'll appreciate everything when I come back to campus for the spring. I look forward to seeing all the leaves grow back, the green and life return to everyone and everything that we eagerly await after the long winters in Vermont. It's true that distance makes the heart grow fonder, and I've come to appreciate my time on campus more than I would have without all my time away throughout the years.

This is all to say how I think taking a leave of absence has been the right decision for me. I understand if you are thinking that I took the $10,000 stipend that the school offered us late in the summer, but they did not actually let those who were already planning to take the fall off have a chance at the money. It certainly would've been a nice bonus, but I didn't get it. Regardless, the popping of the Middlebury bubble has been eye-opening for me. If it fits within your financial capabilities and academic goals, I would highly recommend it to anyone who has the chance.

The lack of physical connection to the outside world is one of the things that many of us adore about where we go to school, but it may also occasionally be a drawback. Now, my time away hasn't given any groundbreaking benefit to any of my campus endeavors (i.e. grades, connections with faculty, sports), but I know that it hasn't taken away from them either. I live about a four-hour drive from campus, so I've been fortunate enough to visit plenty. Although I am not a J.O.B. — Just Outside of Boston — I have been able to see friends while off campus which also helps me stay connected to the community. The biggest drawbacks have been athletics and socially. I wish I could spend more time training for the spring baseball season, which the schedule at school allows while the schedule I've had at work does not. I'd also love to spend more time with the people I only get to visit on weekends. But I know there will be time for all of this when I get back.

I'm working, I'm learning and I'm doing things that most students don't get to do in the short months off for summer break. And, best of all, I still have more time at Midd to look forward to. My dad always said this when leaving home for work trips when my sister and I were younger, and the older I've gotten the more it makes sense and the more it applies here: "How can I miss you if you won't go away?" There's a whole list of clichés that fill the same sentiment, but distance does indeed make the heart grow fonder.



THEA VOLPP

WHY MEDITATE?

Op-Ed

Megan Balparda *and* ***Zhenghao Lin*** *are members of the class of 2026.*

I (Megan) would like to be the first to say that I am unqualified for my position both as the president of the Prajñā Meditation Club and as a writer for this opinion piece. It is because of this that I am so grateful for my board members, Kiley and Zhenghao — the latter of whom has agreed to add their own opinions.

I have found myself as a president of a club I never attended, on a subject in which I am not well-versed. For me, meditation is an aspiration, not something one can achieve. It is a method by which people search for inner peace and connection to the world around them. Meditation is, simply, a thought exercise, used to expand the amount of time one can spend in their own company, without distraction or outside entertainment. It is an important piece of my understanding of spirituality.

In the short time that I have been meditating, I have found a sense of connection with my own thoughts, my community, nature and humanity that I didn't know I was missing. This connection is what I hope to offer others with Prajñā Meditation Club. Meditation provides a route to mind-body harmony, and helps me feel connected to the world around me. The beauty of meditation is that it can mean so many different things for so many different people. Already, I've met students and faculty alike who think of meditation in an entirely different way than I do. With Prajñā, I hope to create a community space for all students to explore what meaning meditation could hold for them.

Because I've been given the opportunity to work with Prajñā, I hope to learn from others in the meditation community here at Middlebury, starting with Zhenghao, my vice president. He has the experience with meditation that I hope to gain, and I'm very excited to be working with him to bring this club to life again!

I (Zhenghao) am really lucky and happy to work with Megan and Kiley! This club would not be possible without their administrative support and good vibes.

I started mindfulness meditation with the meditation apps, Balance and Headspace, back in my freshman year of high school because I had debilitating anxiety. I hope students will benefit from apps such as Headspace as much as I did — you can even get a 85% discount for Headspace with a college email. Neither of the meditation apps are perfect, but they are a good place to start.

I'm still learning about meditation and its roots, but so far, I know that mindfulness meditation has roots in Southern and Western Asia, specifically in Buddhism and Hinduism. Nowadays, the modern world isn't giving enough credit and honor to the roots of meditation, so I feel like it's important to begin with this history.

Meditation, in my opinion, isn't for everyone and doesn't always work for everyone. But many people I know seem to think of meditation as a strict practice where you have to be 100% concentrated on one certain thing, and you can't have any thoughts in order to do it "correctly."I want to clear up these misconceptions that I've seen in my own experience so I can get others to meditate as well. I also want to share why and how I meditate.

There isn't one correct way to meditate; it just comes down to finding the effective kind that suits each individual.

We do not have to focus 100% on one object. It's better to think of focus in meditation as having a consistent and calming point of focus (like a verbal mantra, our breaths and body sensations), and see that as an *option* to go back to if you notice your mind drifting to other things (emphasis on *option*, because you can choose whether or not you want to focus on that thing).

We don't always need to have a clear goal to meditate — sometimes you just want to for the experience, for the connection (group meditations) or just because.

It is an experience of relaxation, so we do not have to force ourselves to focus 100%. You literally can fall asleep while meditating, and that is awesome because it makes you relax.

Like Megan wrote, I also feel a sense of connection, especially to people, when I meditate. The way my body rests on a solid surface (it is not floating in air) and the way my chest rises and falls (it does not stay still), just like everyone else.

Personally I meditate because I'm very sensitive to stimuli and need more silence to process and think. Meditation also doesn't have to be done in silence but that's my go-to; there are a lot of people who meditate with music, or some physical movement.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

With the Board of Trustees on campus and meeting throughout this week to discuss institutional priorities and planned spending, We want to take advantage of this opportunity to directly address the people who have a major role in deciding how the funds raised by "For Every Future: The Campaign for Middlebury," will be used. As the first major fundraising campaign since 2015, aimed at raising $600 million, $383 million of which has already been received, this presents a unique opportunity to consider where Middlebury currently stands and what its future will look like.

While we appreciate the "For Every Future" campaign's focus on financial access and improving college infrastructure, we would like to see you, the Board of Trustees, lead a concerted effort to expand the faculty and staff with greater compensation and narrowly tailor the campaign's goals to the needs of the 2,800 students currently on campus in Vermont.

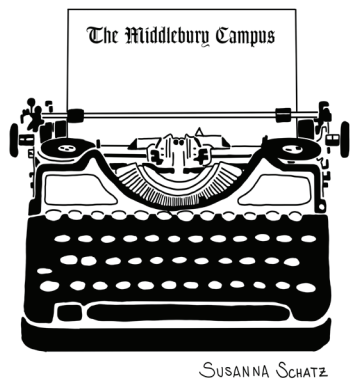
The most laudable aspect of this campaign is its commitment to removing financial barriers to attending Middlebury, as the college has committed $215 million to aid students with tuition costs and daily expenses. Considering that 51% of the student body is on financial aid, we are grateful that you have prioritized such a consequential factor in many student's Middlebury experiences with the largest commitment of any. Creating more scholarships and grants to meet students' financial needs must continue to be a top priority for Middlebury. Beyond the ever-rising sticker price of $83,880, fully participating in Middlebury's opportunities often requires spending some amount of money, ranging from the cost of traveling with an a capella group or debate team to buying winter clothes or a Snow Bowl pass. In last year's Zeitgeist survey, over 50% of students reported feeling satisfied with their aid packages; 36%, however, reported some level of dissatisfaction. There is room to grow in making Middlebury a financially accessible place for all students through these funds, and we urge you to devote time this week to considering how to achieve that goal.

Another feature of the campaign we would like to highlight is the capital projects, which has allocated $117 million to renovating infrastructure on campus such as the Christian A. Johnson Memorial Building and building new housing, such as the new first-year residence hall planned to open in fall 2025. These long-term projects are vital to updating and expanding the physical spaces in which we live and learn. We appreciate the funds already allocated to these projects, but there are many outdated spaces on our campus that no longer serve the interests of students at a modern educational institution. As we have previously reported on, our physical spaces are not inclusive nor accessible for students with disabilities or physical injuries, particularly during the snowy winter months. The college must go beyond renovating a few buildings and one new dorm; we must bring the physical infrastructure across our entire campus into the twenty-first century in a way that works for all Middlebury students.

The part of the "For Every Future" campaign directing $120 million to academic excellence is aimed at providing skill development, advanced teaching tools and supporting research for college faculty. While we appreciate these initiatives, we believe that prioritizing attracting new faculty and paying faculty competitive salaries is of primary importance to academic excellence at Middlebury. Course over enrollment and faculty shortages have placed strains on the academic experience for professors and students alike in recent years, and the college must commit to bringing in new faculty in order to address these issues. In September 2022, the Middlebury Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) published an op-ed calling for a 10% faculty wage increase, as professors' wages have fallen well behind inflation since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to raising faculty wages, acknowledging the strain over enrollment and shouldering the slack of missing faculty members in short staffed departments places on professors is truly prioritizing academic excellence at Middlebury.

The campaign's only mention of staffing is in the context of athletic coaching positions – undoubtedly important, but striking considering it is the sole aspect of staffing addressed. The college has failed its staff tremendously in recent years. Middlebury has a history of under compensating its staff, which is only exacerbated by the rural campus and scarce housing opportunities in Addison County. As a result, Middlebury has suffered many staff departures in recent years, struggled to retain existing staff and had difficulty recruiting new staff. Departments across campus have been impacted as a result of these staffing shortages, with changes made to the dining halls, reduced hours at the Grille and Midd Xpress and Davis Library and the closing of BiHall's Vivarium altogether. The clearest way to address this issue is by putting more money toward staff wages and attracting staff to the college. Middlebury must make a concerted effort to devote more money to compensating its staff, while also continuing to devote initiatives to helping support its staff, such as the Summit Properties affordable housing project.

More staff also allows for increased mental health resources. Especially in a rural community without many surrounding resources, it is the college's job to devote funds to hiring high quality and diverse counselors for students – something students have called for for years. Thirty five percent of students who have Midd Telehealth last year reported feeling somewhat or very dissatisfied with the resource, according to Zeitgeist 5.0. At the same time, strikingly, 49% of students have either never used Midd Telehealth or do not know what it is. Student testimonials and our data point toward a clear lack of accessible and inclusive mental health infrastructure on campus, we have seen limited activity in resolving this problem. We call for you to direct more funds and attention to providing mental health care; institutional support is of the utmost importance given Middlebury's isolated, rural location.



SUSANNA SCHATZ

We would also like to acknowledge that by the time this fundraising campaign concludes in 2028, everyone on our board — and everyone currently enrolled at Middlebury — will have graduated and left the Vermont campus (at least we hope). Our goal in writing this letter is to call attention to the issues we are noticing right now at Middlebury, but we do not anticipate all of them to be resolved immediately during our time here. Rather, as you begin to chart the path Middlebury will take in the coming years, we urge you to listen to what we have identified here for the long-term viability of the college.We hope to see future Middlebury students attend a financially accessible, renovated and renewed college that fairly compensates faculty andstaff and provides sufficient mental health infrastructure.

As the Board of Trustees, you have the opportunity this week to begin looking towards this vision of a greater Middlebury, and we sincerely hope you act on our words. If not you, who else?

Lions and tigers and…the Pillsbury doughboy? Oh my!

By ELLIE TRINKLE
Staff Writer

On a Halloweekend marked by mercurial weather, Middlebury students donned meticulously planned (or thrown together at the last minute) costumes to celebrate October's spookiest holiday. Students could be seen sporting funky hats, face glitter, inflatable suits and everything in between. Celebrities and wizards intermingled, mermaids walked on land and there was an abundance of everyone's favorite environmentalist: the Lorax.

Group and duo costumes were very popular this year. Many people dressed up as construction workers in neon worker vests, hard hats and maybe even a road sign. Fairy costumes were also plentiful; people wore whimsical dresses with wings and decorated their faces with plenty of gems.

Sky Roberts-Salvador '26 was one of many fairies, but she still found a way to make her costume unique. Roberts-Salvador dressed as the tooth fairy and was seen wearing a tiara with fake wisdom teeth glued on and an entire necklace of teeth. Beyond her creative interpretation of a traditional fairy costume, Roberts-Salvador made all of her accessories herself. She described creating the fake teeth out of self-hardening modeling clay, which she then strung with fishing wire and hot glued to a tiara.

Roberts-Salvador was not the only person unafraid to get crafty this Halloween. One student dressed as the beloved Wordle in a costume that was completely self-crafted, and went around having people write in letters to guess the word.

Alongside Roberts-Salvador was Lily Charkey '25.5, who also dressed up as a fairy. Charkey wore a pink slip dress with floral detailing, ribbons in her hair and, of course, fairy wings. Charkey was mainly excited about the group aspect of her Halloween costume.

"I have a couple of friends who are also fairies," Charkey said. "I think that this costume really brings us all together."

Charkey and her friends all wore makeup coordinated with their dress colors. Many other students experimented with fun cosmetics; some skeletons, for instance, painted bones onto their skin themselves.

Dermot McMillan '25's Halloween costume reflected his close relationship with his twin brother, Aidan McMillan '25. The brothers were Thing 1 and Thing 2 from Dr. Seuss' "The Cat in the Hat." Only, they hadn't coordinated beforehand, so both of the shirts they made said Thing 1.

Dermot described how his costume with his brother was heavily inspired by their childhood. "My whole life I've always been referred to as Thing 1 or Thing 2," Dermot said.

Of course, the annual Halloween costume array would be incomplete without a few pop culture references. Students dressed up as Yung Gravy, Justin and Hailey Bieber and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson.

Zach Taylor '26 dressed up as Sia, wearing a bob wig, sunglasses and long gloves. Taylor spent the night giving his many fans autographs.

Arsema Lecko '26 dressed up as one of their favorite album covers, "Negro Swan" by Blood Orange. They wore all white and the signature angel wings that appear on the album cover. The costume reflected Lecko's love for music and also their creativity to think of a unique costume that was also meaningful to them.

Couples costumes also made an appearance. Graham Gordon '26.5 and Emma Hoover '26.5 were dressed as the iconic pairing of Remy the rat and Linguini from "Ratatouille." Gordon dressed in a chef outfit with a very tall hat while Hoover wore mouse ears and painted whiskers on her face.

"We just had to cook ," Gordon said, in reference to their costumes being well-received. "And Remy the rat actually cooks!"

In addition to the "Ratatouille" crew, many other students dressed up as movie and TV show characters. Isla Mitchell '26 decided to honor one of her favorite movies, Wes Anderson's "The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou," by dressing up as Steve Zissou, played by Bill Murray. Mitchell wore a blue vest, blue shorts and Zissou's signature beanie.

Turner Britz '24.5 dressed up as PBS' "Arthur," wearing his iconic glasses and yellow sweater. Princess Mia from "The Princess Diaries" was also a popular costume that featured long white gloves, sunglasses and headphones. Additionally, there were many versions of Batman from both comic books and movie adaptations.

Perhaps the most unusual costumes were the inflatable ones. One student wore an "Among Us" inflatable costume. Another student went as the Pillsbury doughboy, a costume as hilarious as it was humongous.

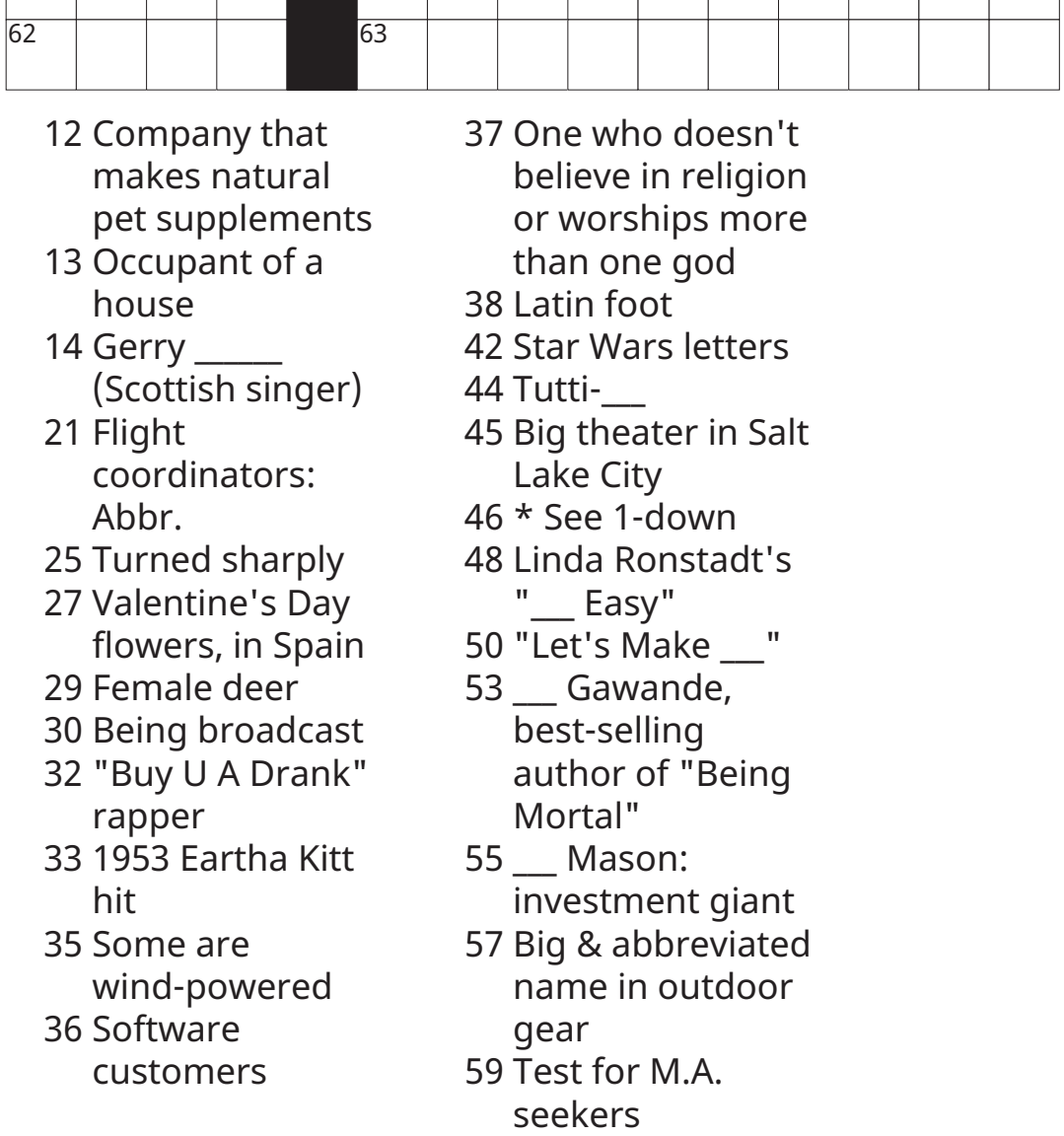
In a similar vein, Ahmed Akoad '26 and Hobart Swan '26 dressed up as Barack Obama and Joe Biden, wearing masks of the Presidents and full suits. What's more, their friends made sure to refer to them as "Mr." and "Sir" when speaking to them.

Ultimately, students at Middlebury this past weekend certainly did not disappoint with their commitment to their Halloween costumes, which allowed for a festive celebration of the spooky holiday campus-wide.

Editors' Note: Sky Roberts-Salvador is a visuals contributor for The Campus.

Happy Week 8 ! (?)

William Reed



ACROSS
1 The most powerful or important people around
11 Way out or in from NYC to the Hamptons, abbr.
15 Employ alliteration in writing
16 Draft status
17 The period between the beginning of the year and the present
18 Bay Area sch. (really good med school)
19 Travis Barker's son
20 Alessia ___
22 LIF (it's just lif)
23 Ed and Mel of baseball
24 Recipe amt.
26 Walked purposefully
28 Hi-___ graphics
29 Owens who authored "Where the Crawdads Sing"
31 Version of someone else's song
32 Connection between a group and a natural object or creature, like an animal or bird, serving as their emblem
34 Mailed
35 Container-selling get-together
39 Military members' financial partner, abbr.
40 Sponsorships
41 TV host Philbin
43 Body shop concerns
44 Morocco's next-largest city after Casablanca
47 Singer Carlile
49 A quick and fun nickname for the name Agnes
50 St. Louis landmark
51 Son of, in Arabic names
52 "___ a puddy tat!"
54 Italian leader, to Mussolini
56 Hair removal brand
58 Horned insect with stag-like appearance
60 Latin 101 verb
61 Pregnancy stand-ins
62 Alien-seeking org.
63 Language of Beowulf

DOWN
1 * With 46-down, Filipino drag queen known for impersonating Taylor Swift
2 Soap ingredient
3 ___ vs. Zombies
4 Hawks and doves
5 Quintillionth: Prefix
6 Vibrantly colored aquarium fish
7 Suffix with dull or drunk
8 Annual prize from the NAACP
9 "___ boy!"
10 Visionaries
11 Alice Phoebe ___
12 Company that makes natural pet supplements
13 Occupant of a house
14 Gerry _____ (Scottish singer)
21 Flight coordinators: Abbr.
25 Turned sharply
27 Valentine's Day flowers, in Spain
29 Female deer
30 Being broadcast
32 "Buy U A Drank" rapper
33 1953 Eartha Kitt hit
35 Some are wind-powered
36 Software customers
37 One who doesn't believe in religion or worships more than one god
38 Latin foot
42 Star Wars letters
44 Tutti-___
45 Big theater in Salt Lake City
46 * See 1-down
48 Linda Ronstadt's "___ Easy"
50 "Let's Make ___"
53 ___ Gawande, best-selling author of "Being Mortal"
55 ___ Mason: investment giant
57 Big & abbreviated name in outdoor gear
59 Test for M.A. seekers

"IF THIS WAS A MOVIE": "TAYLOR SWIFT: THE ERAS TOUR"

By ACADIA KLEPEIS
Arts & Culture Editor

It is hard to go online these days without seeing a mention of Taylor Swift.

The singer's colossal Eras Tour dominated the summer, clogging Instagram feeds with fan videos and consistently headlining major media outlets. Then news broke of her apparent new relationship with Kansas City Chiefs tight end, Travis Kelce, leading to a stunning spike in football viewership. Finally, on Oct. 13, the filmed version of Swift's tour, entitled "Taylor Swift: the Eras Tour," smashed box office records, bringing in almost $100 million in North American ticket sales.

After Ticketmaster crashed during Eras Tour presales last fall, leaving fans stranded in digital waiting lines or without a ticket, Swift's late-August announcement that she would be releasing a self-produced concert movie only two months after the end of her US circuit was met with universal delight. For movie theaters bearing the burden of the WGA and SAG-AFTRA strikes, Swift's legions of fans, affectionately known as "Swifties," represented guaranteed sales.

The playfully-marketed ticket price — $19.89, itself a reference to Swift's birth year and record-breaking re-released studio album — is certainly more expensive than an average movie ticket, but given the dearth of available tour tickets and the gauged resale prices, this price could be seen as a steal. Plus, rather than craning their necks from the nosebleeds, cinemagoers are guaranteed the best angle for every moment, highlighting intricate choreography with an aerial shot or zooming in for a closeup during a ballad.

"[My] own personal excitement of being able to see her for the first time live was just something that I think is impossible to replicate," Hannah Dorosin '24 wrote in a message to The Campus.

Still, Dorosin emphasized the unique benefits of the film. "At the actual tour I had been so far up in the nosebleeds that I missed so many of those details (although being able to see the entire crowd lit up from their bracelets was so cool), and being able to see it on the big screen from right up close and personal with Taylor gave me a whole new perspective."

Evidently enough Middlebury residents felt this way given that the Marquis Theatre had several sold-out showings during opening weekend. At 6:00 p.m., the main theater was packed with college students and younger kids, with noticeably far more women and girls. The crowd was dressed in a mixture of concert merch (for lucky past attendees) and sparkles, with some theatergoers choosing to embody one of the ten specific "Eras" of music that the concert features.

During the first few songs, the audience was quiet, but by the time the first era, "Lover," concluded, viewers seemed to have established an unspoken camaraderie that allowed them to sing along unabashedly for the remainder of the film's 169 minutes. While that might seem long for a movie — even nowadays — it is important to note that a full five songs were cut from the film to reduce the runtime.

"Taylor Swift: the Eras Tour" features music that was written over almost two decades, helping to explain the performance's wide range of emotional and aesthetic styles. Swift's dreamy "Speak Now" ballgown contrasts with her "Reputation" era asymmetrical serpentine jumpsuit, and the signature red soles of Christian Louboutin shoes flashed throughout the performance. In addition to lightning-fast costume changes, the concert marked the shifts in mood through elaborate lighting and set design. "Evermore," for example, offered a witchy atmosphere, featuring hooded dancers and rolling fog, while its sister album "Folklore" saw Swift at home inside a fairytale forest cabin.

"The movie really gives insight into the story she is trying to tell with each era, allowing you to focus deeply on her and her music, and while it may be impossible to recreate the actual intense feeling of being at the live show, the movie is a whole separate experience that is equally as exciting and breathtaking," Dorosin said.

This visual and aural dexterity, in addition to Swift's uncanny ability to replicate her recorded vocals during a three-hour live performance, was part of what delighted audiences.

Daniela Roldan Cabrera '24 raved about the film's visuals. "I loved that I got to see Taylor, the stage and her crew so up close, which is not necessarily what happens at the concert," she said.

"I also really enjoyed the additional effects used to separate the different eras while still having seamless transitions. I still wish all the songs from the concert had been included, but overall I had such a great experience. It allowed me to cry, laugh and sing along with Taylor and other Swifties in the room who were just as excited as I was!"

Lily McGovern '25 also had the chance to see the Eras Tour in-person over the summer, but still made sure to see the film adaptation. In fact, following the film's announcement in August, before the Middlebury Marquis had released tickets, McGovern promptly purchased tickets to a showing in Plattsburgh, N.Y., thinking it would be the closest location for her to see the film. Despite having seen the in-person tour, she still emphasized the sense of community felt in the theater.

"People really had that same excitement to see the movie, especially since it was so hard to go to the concert, so it still felt like a whole experience," she said. "I loved being able to see the choreography and costumes up close, and I noticed so many details that I originally missed when I was at the concert."

Though the dominant demographic appeared to be college-aged women, several guests skewed the data. Among them was Schumann Distinguished Scholar Bill McKibben.

In an email to The Campus, McKibben wrote, "Loved it — less for the music, which seems not all that memorable to my old ears, but for the exuberance she manages to project to 100,000 people, and the world beyond." He added, "It seemed to me as if she was a kind of antidote to the slightly sad staring-at-your-phone that marks our moment; every song seems to be about someone who's done her wrong, but none of it has gotten her down, and she's still ready to go!"

If Bill McKibben has beat you to becoming a Swiftie, consider this your cue. Dip your toe in by streaming the newly released "1989 (Taylor's Version)" — complete with six new singles! — then relish in the full history of Swift's oeuvre with "The Eras Tour" film, in theaters now.

CHARLIE DEICHMAN-CASWELL/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
The Eras Tour film is currently showing at the Middlebury Marquis Theatre.

ISO celebrates International Week with student performances, workshops and business panel

Continued from page 1

allowed students to appreciate the beauty of calligraphy art while learning about each others' cultures and language," Atmani wrote in an email to The Campus. "I would say that the cross-cultural connections that we had with [the Muslim Student Association] and the Arabic house allowed us to celebrate our culture and its beauty in a way that gave a place for WANA Students to enjoy our similarities while celebrating those differences."

As the ISO week events have attracted a larger audience and more participants over the last four to five years, the organizers faced more complications in advertising and communication.

"Since marketing is time-sensitive, there was a lot of stress to publish all the materials in time. However, because a lot of the details for our week were not settled until late, we had to keep pushing back our deadline for the marketing materials. Also, a lot of our members are new to the team and new to Adobe Illustrator. I am proud that they were able to learn and adapt quickly," said Changchang Ma '26, the director of marketing and communications for the ISO.

Organizing such a feat could have detracted from her experience at the actual events, but Ma said she still enjoyed the planning process of the ISO week.

With many of its board members from previous semesters studying abroad, the ISO had fewer experienced leaders on campus, making it more difficult than in past years to organize large-scale events and communicate logistics.

"It was a long process to filter and curate a diverse set of events we want to and are capable of presenting to the community," said Maya Teiman '25, co-president of the ISO. "It was a big challenge to coordinate events that genuinely felt interesting and feasible for our club members to host and the community to participate. We want it done as collaboratively as possible, and we are generally happy with our result."

The food festival on Sunday concluded the busy week, providing a space of appreciation for various cuisines prepared and presented by students. The food festival was so popular and grew to include so many different types of food, it originally had to be postponed to allow more time to acquire all the ingredients, according to Ma. Eventually, she said, it was a great success.

Co-hosting a station featuring traditional noodle dish from Shaanxi, China, Lynn Yan '24.5 described the satisfaction she felt from cooking for the community.

"At first I was hesitant for fear of cultural appropriation as it is difficult to bring out the fullest of the dish given various limitations and to introduce and educate an audience that doesn't necessarily have exposure to the flavors and the history of the food," Yan said. " I personally felt very happy when people started lining up and waiting patiently at our station wanting more, even though we couldn't cook that fast."

Ultimately, the food festival's main goal was for students to take a break from their busy daily schedules and provide a space to show appreciation for the diverse cuisine, culture and people that make up the ISO.

"It's nice because it's not just us presenting to an American audience, but it's also us learning and enjoying each other's unique cultural traditions, and for all of us, it's really not about having to know every single detail and information about the food, but more to have the chance to be together to talk, bond, and have fun," Yan said.

Editors' Note: Changchang Ma '26 is an online editor for The Campus.

SOCIAL MEDIA TAKES CENTER STAGE IN "GREEK TRAGEDY"

By CATHERINE GOODRICH
Contributing Writer

In a typical Greek tragedy, there is a moment when the story's heroic figure faces disaster and in the same moment intimately connects with the audience. The first of two faculty shows this fall, "Greek Tragedy," delivers a contemporary, 2010s-inspired take on this premise.

Associate Professor of Theater Michole Biancosino directed a show that explored a typical Greek tragedy's theme of the fraught relationship between mortals and gods and, in this play more specifically, the relationship between Instagram users and internet fame. The production showcased the attractions and dangers of constructing identities online, and audiences were called to question their own relationships to the modern digital world.

The play follows best friends Anna, a popular blogger-turned-influencer (Aiden Amster '23.5), and Jennifer, an aspiring writer trying to make ends meet (Bri Beach '23.5). As Anna's fame grows, she begins to make decisions that put her friendship with Jennifer at risk. Jennifer, who once questioned the dangers of internet culture, becomes Anna's ghostwriter, finding herself in close proximity to the superficiality she once questioned.

Jennifer acts as the audience's lens into this new world, metatheatrically shaping the story as it goes along by addressing spectators directly. The characters are inspired by the story of Caroline Calloway, a notorious internet celebrity, and Calloway's former ghostwriter, Natalie Beach. The story of Beach and Calloway culminated when Beach wrote a viral article in 2019 describing her tumultuous friendship with Calloway and the chaos that ensued.

From the moment theater-goers entered Wright Memorial Theatre, the show's production design dazzled. Flutists dressed in togas and gilded ivy crowns welcomed a full house to their seats, which were on the stage itself, hammering home the play's unusual relationship with the idea of "audience." Chairs were arranged in a horseshoe shape resembling a theatron typical of shows in fifth century B.C. Greece.

The show opened with a prologue delivered next to a ghost light in reference to themes of ghostwriting, the ghosts of tradition haunting the play's format, and the literal ghost who plays the role of Anna. "Greek Tragedy" went on to present episodes narrated by the show's protagonists and enriched by a chorus, as is custom in the structure of traditional Greek tragedies.

Playwright Lia Romeo's script is concerned with themes of love, loss and pride, but especially historiography: who gets to narrate what and how. Anna often interrupts Jennifer's narration to protest that her description is not how something happened, how something was said or what was worn. Characters break the fourth wall often, sometimes comedically and sometimes with a startling sincerity that jolts the audience. In an age where the importance of self-presentation is inescapable on and offline, it's no wonder the script constantly calls on its characters to consider how their stories will be told.

In the director's note in the playbill, Biancosino offers an insight into what drew her to the play.

"It's the metatheatrical elements of the script that most appealed to me… There is a long history, indeed around 2000 years, of playwrights calling attention to the methods of theatre within a piece of theatre, of asking an audience to consider their relationship to the work as they are watching," Biancosino wrote.

Amster and Beach delivered epic performances, and there was hardly a moment without one of them on stage. Amster was able to capture the magnetic, multidimensional flavor of a larger-than-life figure, both wildly successful and spiraling out of control. Beach commanded the stage as the perceptive best friend who learns to step into a world of stylish personal branding. These actors are undoubtedly at the top of their game in their last semesters at Middlebury — their stamina and ability to turn otherwise lackluster lines into compelling conversation was nothing short of impressive.

"Greek Tragedy" is a rare case of a faculty show being centered around only two characters. Despite this setup of two talented actors delivering the lion's share of the sproduction's thematic elements, it was the lighting, sound and chorus that gave the show a unique, charming flavor.

Maggie Blake '24 performed as a talent agent and member of the chorus.

"The show was a relief to see come to life —this was a substantial group effort that was so gratifying to be a part of," Blake said.

"Greek Tragedy" was no small feat and was a commendable accomplishment of acting, directing and design alike that managed to capture the intersection between technology and identity while honoring an ancient genre.

CLINTON BRANDHAGEN/COURTESY PHOTO
As business executives buy them drinks, Anna and Jennifer's different outlooks are exemplified.

CLINTON BRANDHAGEN/COURTESY PHOTO
Adramatic moment between the two friends in "Greek Tragedy."

Woman of the year nominee: how Elise Morris '22.5 carved a legacy on and off the field

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Senior Sports Editor

Of the 619 athletes nominated for the NCAA Woman of the Year Award, only 30 were named to the final shortlist. Middlebury's own Elise Morris '22.5 was one of them.

Now halfway around the world playing professionally in the second tier of French soccer for FC Metz Féminine, Morris' legacy lives on at Middlebury, both through her stellar athletic career and through her work in developing and facilitating an anti-racism and consent education curriculum for student-athletes. Morris is the second consecutive Panther and sixth Middlebury student ever to make the 30 woman shortlist after Erin Nicholas '22 was nominated last year.

"I think [the nomination] speaks to the importance of this [anti-racism and consent education] work and theory behind it that there is something to be said about student athletes coming together and talking about taboo things," Morris said. "This work has been happening in the past and needs to continue to happen, but it feels amazing that it's being recognized at this moment in time."

Morris' beginnings in diversity, equity and inclusion work date back far before their Middlebury days. As a high school student, Morris created a DEI curriculum called Athletes as Leaders for athletes and facilitated discussions with every varsity program at her high school in Seattle. Upon arriving at Middlebury, Morris tweaked their program to tailor it specifically to the Middlebury environment in order to best fit the Middlebury athletic community.

"This program is based on the theory that athletes have social capital in the communities they are a part of," Morris said. "I knew there was an opportunity for us as the student athlete community on campus to be doing more, to be stepping up. It is our responsibility to arm ourselves with the tools to create the culture that we all want to be a part of."

The NCAA Woman of the Year Award was created in 1991 to honor athletes on women's athletic teams for their achievements on and off the field. On the soccer pitch, Morris was a mainstay at the heart of the Panthers' defense for four years, playing 66 career games and helping the team win two NESCAC titles. In their senior season, Morris captained the team and played all but 76 minutes of the season.

Aside from her achievements as a player, it is perhaps her feats as a member of the campus community for which Morris will be best remembered. In addition to facilitating hourlong conversations with varsity teams about navigating complicated issues like campus social norms, locker room conversations and player-coach relationships, Morris also worked as a member of the Title IX Office to promote awareness and prevention of sexual violence on campus.

Reflecting on their time at Middlebury, Morris hopes their work can continue to serve as an example of the impacts students can have on their community. "Stepping your foot in a new world does change that place," she said. "That's something to be proud of and something that can be done intentionally."

Now starting a new chapter in Metz on the eastern border of France, Morris is still pursuing her passions for soccer and social advocacy. In addition to their burgeoning career in soccer, Morris is starting a non-profit called Cultivating Healthy Athletes who Move with Purpose (CHAMP) with former teammate Ellie Greenberg '20.

"It's basically a continuation of what I did at Middlebury, but I want to open it to as many college campuses as possible," Morris said. "The idea is to spread this message as far and wide as possible so that many more people have access to these resources."

While Morris continues to further her career with her non-profit and FC Metz Féminine, the NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics will deliberate as they decide on the Woman of the Year award winner. One winner from each NCAA division will be announced at the NCAA Convention in January 2024.

ELISE MORRIS / COURTESY PHOTO

Elise Mossis '22.5 signed for FC Metz Féminine in August of this year.

WOMEN'S SOCCER FALLS SHORT OF THE NESCAC TOURNAMENT

By LEXI LINAFELTER
Sports Editor

The Middlebury women's soccer team has officially concluded their season, finishing ninth in the NESCAC despite a win against second place conference opponent Williams College on Tuesday, Oct. 24, narrowly missing the opportunity to compete for the NESCAC title.

Overall, the Panthers' season record was a positive one, with six wins, four losses, and five draws. Unfortunately, the team's conference record paled in comparison as the team finished 2–4–4. Coming off of a considerably more successful 2022 season (10–5–1 overall and 5–4–1 in the NESCAC), the season was certainly not everything the Panthers had hoped or expected.

There was no shortage of action this season; having scored 28 goals overall against only 15 scored by their opponents, the Panthers' offense clearly has the firepower to score. Rather, it appears as though the silent killer of the Panthers' season were in-conference ties.

The stats tallied in the 0–0 showdown against Wesleyan University on Sept. 30 accurately depict the frustration the team experienced this season, according to Maddie Schin '24.5. Middlebury took 25 shots and 14 on target compared to Wesleyan's eight but was unable to find the back of the net. The Panthers had six corner kick opportunities in comparison to the Cardinals' one.

This theme carried through the following weekend against Colby College, where the Panthers more than doubled the Mules' attempts to score and still found no success, tying again 0–0.

At the conclusion of the Panthers' season, the team finished third for shots on goal with an impressive 279 in 15 games played. It was not until their final matchup, an unexpected victory against Williams, that Middlebury was able to break their duck and find their flow on the field.

To any observer of this season for the Panthers, it appears that building a successful soccer season in the NESCAC is as much of an art as it is a science.

This season, Middlebury underwent a large-scale changing of the guard defensively, both concerning the style of play and the personnel charged with starting the attack. New core defenders Schin, Roshann Purcell '26 and Beatrice Donovan '23.5 spent the season looking to build possession out of the back in contrast to the kickball style of defense taken in prior years.

Offensively, the season was a bit more complicated. Between Gigi Day '27, Joely Virzi '24, Sophia Cole '25, Abby Ward '25, and Ella Gagnon '23.5, it was nearly impossible to predict who was going to take the field and when. While the depth of the team's offense was certainly an asset, the frequent rotation of players may have hindered the team's ability to find a steady rhythm.

In soccer, a sport often referred to as a "game of inches" because of how low-scoring it tends to be, there is an argument to be made that the best team on the field is not always the one that walks away with the win.

"I could argue both ways for sure," Schin said. "Overall it was just so frustrating because we could feel as a team how good we were and just weren't quite able to get it done."

Though the team showed signs of brilliance at the beginning and end of the season, the Panthers struggled to put the ball in the back of the net in critical moments.

But do not expect them to stay down for long. With a pool of talented young players and an astonishing rising 16 seniors next year, fans have plenty of reason to believe the women's soccer team can be back in top form next fall.

WILL COSTELLO / COURTESY PHOTO

The women's soccer team finished ninth in the NESCAC with a 2-4-4 record in the conference

WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY FINISHES THIRD, MEN'S FOURTH AT NESCAC CHAMPIONSHIP

Alec Gironda finished fourth in the race. COURTESY PHOTO

Audrey Maclean finished second in the women's race. COURTESY PHOTO

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor at Large

The women's and men's cross country teams traveled to Amherst, Mass. to compete in the NESCAC Championships on Oct. 28, finishing third and fourth, respectively.

The 25th-ranked women's team ran a six-kilometer race and snagged a top-three finish overall behind Williams and Amherst. Audrey MacLean '27 was runner-up in the race and the first Middlebury runner to cross the finish line. Bea Parr '25 followed her, finishing fourth with a new personal best. Kate Ratcliffe '25, Tatum Peskin '24 and Victoria Fawcett '26 also scored for the Panthers.

The 20th-ranked men's team competed in an eight-kilometer race and placed fourth behind the reigning champion Williams College, as well as Amherst College and Tufts University. Alec Gironda '24 was the first finisher for the Panthers, crossing the line in fourth place. Ziggy Goddard '25 clocked in at 12th after climbing five spots over the last stretch of the race. Drew Donahue '25, Benjamin Hughes '27 and Peter Burke '24 rounded out Middlebury's scorers.

Peskin and Gironda, both captains of their respective teams, noted that the unusually hot day with temperatures over 70°F added an extra challenge to the course.

"It was a serious cross country day, between the heat, it was a really hilly course, [and] it was kind of muddy. It was gritty, but that's part of the fun of it," Gironda said. "We put it all out there, given the hard day, and I was really happy with how we handled it. Days like that are always tough."

Peskin, who finished the day in 31st place, said that the strength and depth of the team contributed to their results, especially amidst the difficult race conditions.

"This is definitely the deepest our team has been in a super long time," Peskin said. "So it's really nice knowing we had a pack of literally fifteen girls who could be scoring. We just wanted to see what we could do."

Peskin also enjoyed the high energy of the championship meet, created in part by the crowd of track teammates, alums and family members that came to the meet to cheer.

"Literally at every portion of the course, there was some Middlebury person cheering for us, which was super helpful and super high energy, which was fun," she added.

For Gironda, the race offered an exciting opportunity to run against long-time competitors again.

"NESCAC energy is always great. Everyone knows each other, even on different teams," Gironda said. "Being able to finish up with the guys I've run with for four years was a nice bow on my time here. We were all very chummy afterward."

Both Peskin and Gironda eagerly anticipate having another crack against rivals like Amherst and Williams while wrapping up a fulfilling cross country season. The women's and men's teams are headed to NCAA MidEast Regional Championships on Nov. 11 at Westfield State University in Westfield, Mass., where they will compete to secure a spot at the NCAA Championships at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa. the following weekend.

"This has probably been my favorite season ever," Gironda said. "Just the energy on the team and camaraderie. Guys are just in such good spirits, and we're having so much fun and, at the same time, competing at such a high level."

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